



**BELONG BLUE MOUNTAINS INC | KATOOMBA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE (MAIN OFFICE)**

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## **Gazette Editorial Content: 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

### **PAGE TITLE: OUR MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY**

# **Bringing our community together online.**

While COVID-19 continues to impact the way we live in our community, the team at Belong Blue Mountains Community and Neighbourhood Services continue to provide essential face-to-face services in a safe way and are also working to keep our community connected and supported online.

“Our Zoom Community Room is available for community groups to use and we are about to hold a series of Community Conversations online as well as information sessions to help parents and children build resilience and feel prepared for the coming Bushfire season.” said Kath Harrison, CEO of Belong Blue Mountains. “We are also very proud and excited to be an organising partner of the wonderful Blue Fringe Art & Literature Festival as it launches for the first time as a virtual exhibition in October this year.”

The Blue Fringe Art & Literature Festival is now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year and is recognised as a significant event on the Blue Mountains cultural calendar. Blue Fringe celebrates the creativity of people with lived experience of mental illness and aims to create positive conversations around mental illness and the benefits of creativity to support good mental health and wellbeing. The Festival showcases work by local artists, writers and crafts people in the categories of Art, Sculpture, Textiles, Photography, Poetry and Short Stories offering monetary prizes for excellence.

The organising committee for Blue Fringe is made up of workers from Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, Belong Blue Mountains, Stride Mental Health and Blue Mountains Women’s Health and Resource Centre, together with a committed and passionate team of volunteers. Along with a number of generous local businesses, the Blue Mountains City Council has supported the Festival for many years and has recognised the important role the event plays in our community and in generating positive conversations around mental health.

“While we will miss gathering the community together in a physical way to celebrate all of the amazing work this year, we are excited about the possibilities and new opportunities that going virtual will bring.” said Karen Stevenson from the Blue Fringe Committee. “An engaging online exhibition will allow us to share the work and the message of Blue Fringe with a much wider audience and engage a whole lot of people we would never have reached otherwise.”

Entries for the Art and Literature categories will close on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October. General entry is open to Adults who have had a lived experience of mental illness. Youth entry is open to all budding artists and writers of High School Age in celebration of mental wellbeing and resilience. Go to [www.belongbm.org.au/bluefringe](http://www.belongbm.org.au/bluefringe) for more information.

If you, or someone you know, need a little extra support or don’t know where to turn, please get in touch with Belong Blue Mountains on 02 4782 1117, visit our website [www.belongbm.org.au](http://www.belongbm.org.au) or contact your local Neighbourhood Centre. For 24-hour crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14, or call 000 in an emergency.



Time to step into a new kind of exhibition  
Blue Fringe Arts 2020 is going VIRTUAL

Artwork by Livonne Larkins, Blue Fringe exhibitor and supporter.